

McDermott Property Site Management Plan Environmental Assessment

February 2006

**Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
Shasta County
California**

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**McDermott Property Site Management Plan
Environmental Assessment**

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Shasta County, California**

Summary

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area proposes to undertake active management of the McDermott property, a three-acre tract bequeathed to Whiskeytown by the Paul and Muriel McDermott lifetime estate. This environmental assessment examines three alternative ways to manage the McDermott Property site to achieve the goals of the mission of the National Park Service to both protect the physical and cultural resources of the site and to make these resources available for the enjoyment of the public. Alternative C, the preferred alternative, proposes to utilize the property as a facility to serve a variety of uses to benefit the public and park operations. The structures on the site would be rehabilitated to provide much-needed space for park operations, while other portions of the site would serve as exhibit areas for interpretive programs to educate visitors about gold mining activities in the Whiskeytown area.

Note to Reviewers and Respondents

If you wish to comment on the environmental assessment, you may mail comments to the name and address below. Our practice is to make comments, including names and addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. **If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment.** We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. All comments received by March 15, 2006 will be considered by park staff for inclusion and analysis into this environmental assessment.

Please Address Comments to:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Purpose and Need	5
History and Description of the Project Area.....	7
Scoping	10
Relationship of the Proposed Action to Previous Planning Efforts	10
Alternatives	11
Alternative A (No Action).....	11
Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	12
Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse for Park Operations – Proposed Action)	12
The Environmentally Preferred Alternative	13
Mitigation Measures of Alternative C – Proposed Action	14
Actions Common to Several or All the Alternatives	15
Affected Environment.....	17
Impact Topics Analyzed in This Environmental Assessment	17
Visitor Use and Safety	17
Park Operations	17
Wildlife.....	18
Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species	18
Vegetation	19
Threatened or Endangered Plant Species.....	19
Water Resources (Water Quality, Wetlands, and Floodplains)	19
Geology and Soils.....	20
Cultural Resources	20
Impact Topics Dismissed From Further Analysis	22
Prime and Unique Farmlands	22
Soundscape Management.....	22
Lightscape Management.....	22
Socioeconomic Environment	22
Environmental Justice.....	23
Impacts.....	24
Methodology for Assessing Impacts	24
Effects of the Alternatives	24
Type of Impact	24
Duration of Impact.....	24
Intensity of Impact.....	25
Cumulative Impacts	25
Impacts to Cultural Resources and §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act	25
Impairment Summary Statement	26
Visitor Use and Safety	26
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	26
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	27
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	27
Park Operations	28
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	28
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	28
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	29
Wildlife.....	29
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	29
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	29
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	30

Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species	30
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	30
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	31
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	31
Vegetation	31
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	31
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	32
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	32
Threatened and Endangered Species Vegetation.....	33
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	33
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	33
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	33
Water Resources (Water Quality, Wetlands, and Floodplains)	34
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	34
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	34
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	34
Geology and Soils	35
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	35
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	36
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	36
Cultural Resources	37
Definitions of Intensity Levels	37
Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)	37
Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)	38
Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action).....	38
Conclusion	41
Consultation and Coordination.....	41
Preparers	41
Distribution List.....	42
Bibliography	43
Appendix 1	44
News Release	45
Public Service Announcement (11/30/01)	46

Figures and Tables.

Figure 1: Whiskeytown National Recreation Area Vicinity Map	8
Figure 2: McDermott Property Site Vicinity Map	8
Figure 3: McDermott Property Site Sketch Map	9
Table 1: Comparative Summary of Alternatives and Extent To Which Each Alternative Meets the Project Objectives	16
Table 2: Comparative Summary of Environmental Impacts.....	39

INTRODUCTION

Whiskeytown is a unit of the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area and is located in Shasta County, California, about eight miles (13 kilometers) west of downtown Redding (see Figure 1). Whiskeytown is a National Park Service site of about 42,500 acres (17,000 hectares) of land and water. Elevations range from 800 feet (250 meters) in lower Clear Creek below Whiskeytown Dam to over 6,200 feet (1,900 meters) atop Shasta Baldy. Vegetation in the lower elevations consists of oak woodlands and chaparral, mixed conifer in middle elevations and, in higher elevations, mixed conifer-old growth forest. Most of the mid elevation mixed conifer forest is second growth resulting from logging between the 1940s and early 1970s. Whiskeytown Lake, created by the earth-filled Whiskeytown Dam on Clear Creek, has a surface area of about 3,200 acres (1,300 hectares).

Whiskeytown was established by the Act of November 8, 1965, to:

“...provide, for the public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the Whiskeytown reservoir and surrounding lands...by present and future generations and the conservation of scenic, scientific, historic and other values contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters...” (P.L. 89-336).

Whiskeytown Lake provides high quality reservoir recreation opportunities because of its forested mountain setting and its natural lake-like appearance since the reservoir is kept full throughout the summer months. The park has an average visitation of about 700,000 visitors per year. Visitation levels can soar in dry years when other nearby reservoirs are severely drawn down. The Bureau of Reclamation manages the power and water supply functions of Whiskeytown Dam and Reservoir. The National Park Service manages all other facilities within the recreation area including all lands, streams, and associated forest.

In 1969, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area in-holders, Mr. and Mrs. Paul McDermott, entered into a lifetime estate agreement with the National Park Service. As a part of this agreement, Mr. and Mrs. McDermott sold a large number of acres of land to the federal government and retained the use of a 3 acre parcel until Mr. McDermott's death or until his children reached the age of 30—whichever occurred later. This lifetime estate was officially abandoned by the McDermott executor on January 30, 2001. Since that time, the National Park Service has focused on making the property safe for public use, inventorying real property and artifacts, and investigating the property for hazardous waste as a result of the mining operations that occurred on and near the property for the past 150 years.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Now that the McDermott Property site is officially a part of the park's land base, a management direction for its resources needs to be developed. However, before the McDermott Property site can be made accessible to the public or otherwise used, a number of issues need to be addressed. These issues are at the heart of the purpose and need for this project in that the site needs to be made safe for public access and its physical and cultural resources need to receive the adequate restoration and protection they require to realize the McDermott Property's potential to add to the park's historic legacy. These issues are:

Hazardous Materials: The National Park Service staff noted the presence of hazardous waste materials on the property and is investigating the extent of remediation needed for clean up of these materials. The primary hazardous waste material is residual mercury left behind from gold ore processing in and around the stamp mill, waste rock piles, and cabin. Asbestos shingles are present inside the cabin structure, raising the concern about associated asbestos dust. National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey investigations of metal contaminants at Whiskeytown reported that in the Grizzly Gulch area, high levels

of nickel have been found in sediments and high levels of selenium have been found in predatory insects. Hazardous materials need to be cleaned up and safely removed from the site.

Disturbed Lands: The landforms within the property have been altered by past construction and mining activities. In some areas, water systems and roadways disrupt surface hydrology. Water has been diverted from riparian areas to provide water for residential and mining uses. Most notably, a cement spring box adjacent to a stand of riparian vegetation occurs within a drainage entering the upper part of the site. Roads and impoundments also block ephemeral drainages. Mining tailings exist within the floodplain of Grizzly Gulch Creek, partially impeding water flow. A number of roads can be found on and adjacent to the McDermott Property site. These were developed for exploration and exploitation of minerals under previous ownership. These roads do not support the park's desire to restore and protect physical and cultural resources to the fullest extent possible.

Hazardous Forest Fuels: The site has been extensively cleared over the years and exhibits various degrees of vegetation succession. In recent years, hazardous fuels reduction work was completed only in areas adjacent to the property's structures. The entire site needs to be evaluated and treated for hazardous forest fuels reduction.

Safety: The property currently contains a number of buildings, machinery, and artifacts left behind by the previous owners and their ancestors. Visitors to the site have unfettered access to most of these structures and materials and such easy access poses a safety threat that needs to be addressed by park managers. Grizzly Gulch Road (See Figures 2 and 3, pages 7 and 8) is a Shasta County road that is maintained up to the property boundary and then abandoned as it continues outside the park boundary and onto private land. Travel up and down Grizzly Gulch Road is possible for vehicles with high clearance and four-wheel drive. The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek is deteriorating and unsafe for vehicle and pedestrian use. Park law enforcement personnel have reported that vandalism is a common occurrence to the unoccupied residence and shop buildings on the McDermott Property. The property is located in an area of Shasta County where marijuana cultivation activities have been detected by law enforcement. Illegal camping has also recently occurred in this area.

The park's General Management Plan (GMP) does not specifically address the topic of what to do with new lands that are acquired by the park. However, the GMP does call for the restoration of natural landscapes and landforms, including areas impacted by mining. The GMP stresses the importance of improving water quality by restoring natural hydrology where possible. Additionally, the GMP supports, in many of its goals, the rehabilitation or restoration of selected cultural resources.

A park business plan completed in 2003 identified the need for maximizing opportunities presented by the park's unused and lightly used facilities such as those found at the McDermott Property site. Specifically, the business plan identified a strategy of utilizing these facilities either to generate revenue for management of the park or to increase cost savings for under-funded park operations.

This environmental assessment considers alternatives for the future management of the McDermott Property site. Each of the alternatives treats the issues identified above as objectives and then proposes a new management direction for the site which would be a feasible way to both address these issues and to reasonably incorporate this site into Whiskeytown's existing land resource base.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA

Mr. Richard A. and Lily Mae McDermott moved their family from Alameda, California, to the Oak Bottom area near Whiskeytown in 1921. The McDermott's constructed a small cabin with a stone fireplace in a small meadow just upslope from Grizzly Gulch Creek and about ¼ mile north of what now is State Highway 299. Mr. McDermott was a schoolteacher and he raised his family (3 boys and 1 girl) in the Grizzly Gulch cabin. The second generation of McDermott's, Paul and Richard McDermott, established separate homes in Grizzly Gulch just down the valley from their parents' cabin, closer to Highway 299.

In 1953, Mr. Paul McDermott and his wife, Muriel, constructed a two-bedroom home on a flat rise with a view of Shasta Bally to the south. The McDermott's raised their family of two girls in the home and lived at this residence until his death at age 76 on June 26, 2001. Mrs. Muriel McDermott died in the mid-1980s. The McDermott's owned a substantial amount of land within the boundary of the National Recreation Area that they sold to the federal government on September 30, 1969, on a life tenancy basis. The McDermott Property site includes the remains of the Richard A. and Lily Mae McDermott cabin as well as the cabin and outbuildings of Paul and Muriel McDermott.

Paul McDermott's brother, Richard, owns an adjacent three-acre parcel that was retained as private property within the park's legislative boundary. Mr. Richard McDermott continues to live on this property as his primary residence.

The McDermott Property site is located on the north side of State Highway 299, across the road from the Oak Bottom Campground and Marina, in an area known as Grizzly Gulch. A perennial stream on the property flows into an arm of Whiskeytown Lake known as Grizzly Gulch Cove (see Figure 3). There is no surface water access from Grizzly Gulch Cove to Whiskeytown Lake as Highway 299 prevents access. The property is located just ¼ mile from Oak Bottom Campground that has 110 campsites with potentially over 200 people per night within walking distance of the property.

The McDermott Property site is slightly sloping wooded land which drains southward into nearby Grizzly Gulch Creek and Whiskeytown Lake. The tract is situated on the boundary of a riparian, chaparral, and pine forest plant community and a small finger of Whiskeytown Lake (Grizzly Gulch Cove). Tall knobcone pines and mature manzanita, chamise, poison oak and blackberry cover the three acres that make up the site.

The property (see Figure 3) has several bulldozed gravel roads that provide access to all corners of the property and provide vehicular access to various outbuildings, mining equipment, and storage areas. Some of the roads are bladed and oiled while others are just scars on the hill slope. Vegetation is quickly reclaiming these unused roads.

The soils on the property do not have a well-developed organic upper layer and the numerous bladed roads, excavated pits, and mining waste rock piles have altered natural drainage patterns. Small watercourses flow seasonally in low, wide drainages in a southward direction. The property is generally open to sunlight, with areas of semi-shade throughout.

The main structures are the two-bedroom McDermott cabin, a wooden shop shed and a larger welding shop. Both the shop shed and the welding shop were moved to the property from the town of Whiskeytown when the reservoir was filled in 1963. Other features include an outhouse, several small storage sheds, two gardens, storage piles, a circular driveway and a pump house.



Figure 1. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area Vicinity Map.

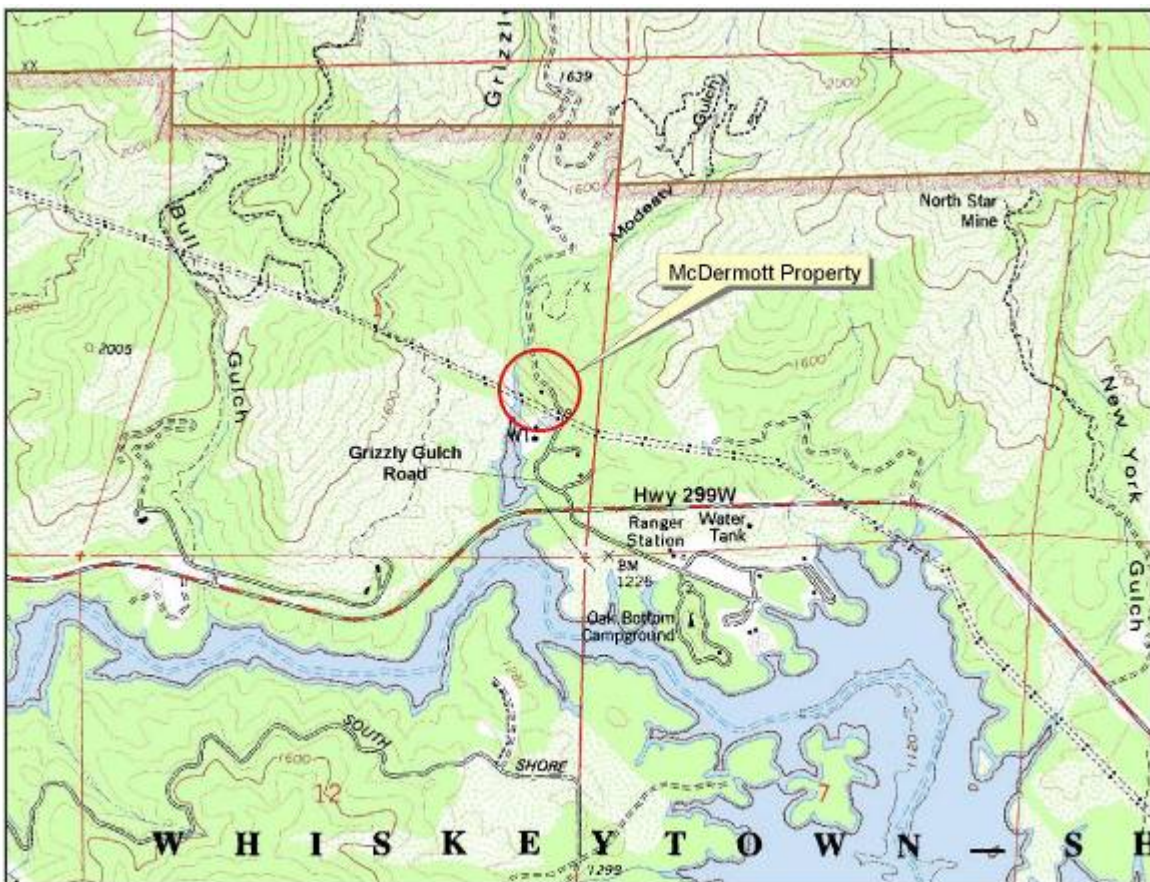


Figure 2. McDermott Property Site Vicinity Map.

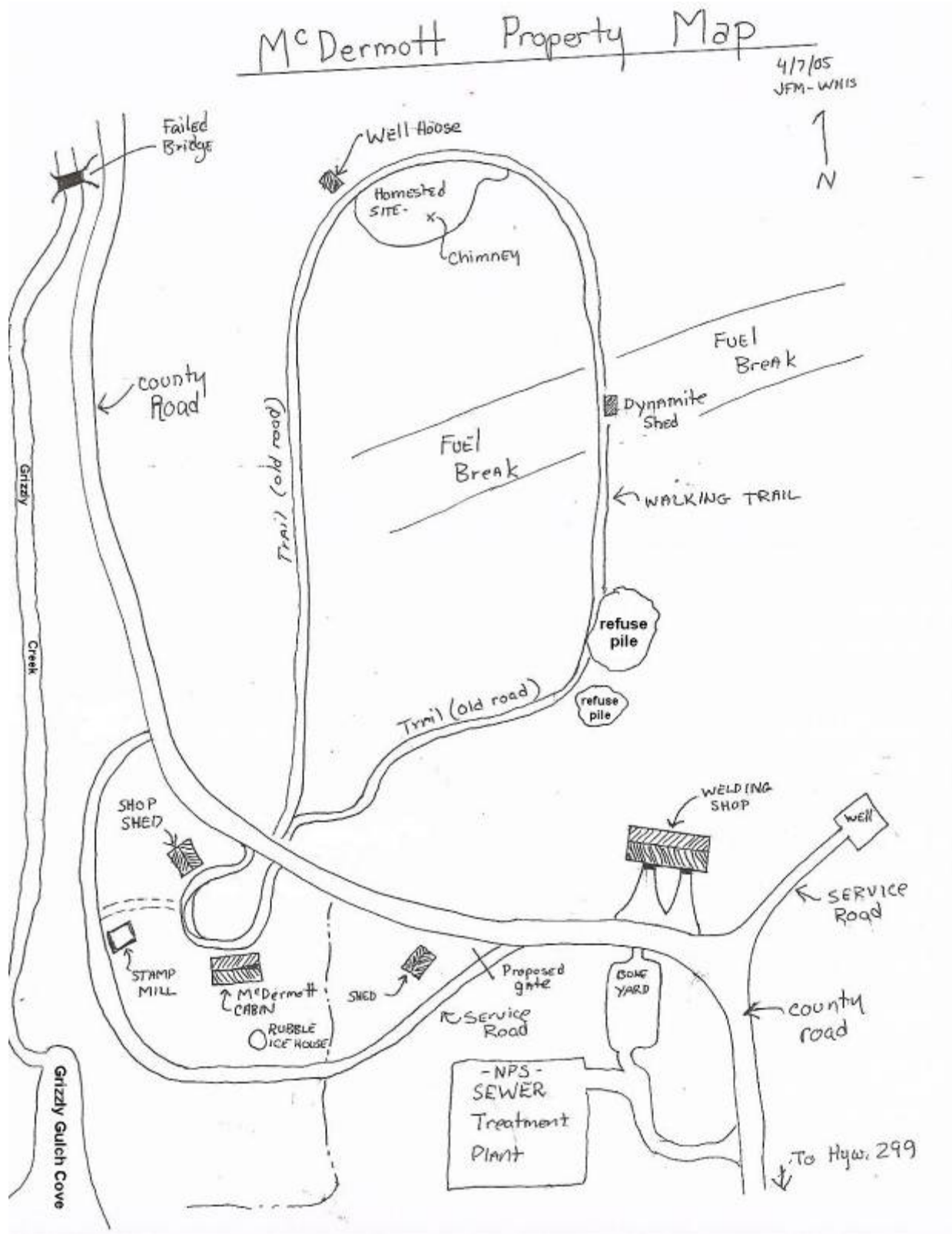


Figure 3: McDermott Property Site Sketch Map (Not to Scale).

SCOPING

Scoping is an early and open process to determine the breadth of environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in an environmental assessment. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area conducted both internal scoping with National Park Service staff and external scoping with the public and interested and affected groups and agencies.

A press release and a letter to interested parties were sent out in October 2002 and described the National Park Service's intent to develop a site management plan for the McDermott Property (see Appendix 1, pages 44 and 45, for the text of both).

In October, 2002, a public scoping meeting was held at the McDermott cabin in Grizzly Gulch. There were many ideas proposed in the meeting as to what should be done with the cabin and the property. Many of the comments centered on the importance of preserving the property's heritage to allow the public to see how miners lived in the 1940's and earlier and to restore the area to allow natural processes to occur in the form of revegetation along riparian corridors and bulldozer cuts, and cleaning up contaminated sites. Additionally, attendees felt that the welding shop, shop shed and cabin should be restored and maintained as part of the plan for the park to expand interpretive opportunities.

The undertakings described in this document are subject to §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended in 1992 (16 USC 470 *et seq.*). Consultations with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) are being conducted under the auspices of a Programmatic Agreement between the California SHPO and the National Park Service. This environmental assessment will be submitted to the SHPO for review and comment to fulfill Whiskeytown National Recreation Area's obligations under §106 (36 CFR 800.8[c], *Use of the NEPA process for section 106 purposes*).

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED ACTION TO PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

As mentioned above, there is no specific direction for disposition or management of new properties acquired by Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. A Resources Management Plan completed in 1997 for the park identified 16 management objectives that would be used to guide resource-related management decisions; of these, at least six are directly pertinent to the McDermott Property site and have been incorporated into the development of the alternatives which are described below. Other planning efforts affecting the area of the McDermott Property site include a recently completed Fire Management Plan which identifies the maintenance of a shaded fuel break system along the north side of the site as well as the construction of a fire cache and fire engine bays in the Oak Bottom Campground and Marina developed site. Ongoing use and maintenance of the shaded fuel break system and proximity of a new fire cache are not expected to impact management of the McDermott site, though improved wildland fire safety for the site is anticipated.

ALTERNATIVES

The no-action alternative (Alternative A) and two action alternatives are presented here. Additionally, the environmentally preferable alternative is defined and identified, mitigation measures undertaken in the proposed action are described, and actions common to several or all the alternatives are discussed.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)

Under the No Action Alternative, the McDermott Property site would be maintained as it presently exists, with the three major structures (cabin, shop shed, and welding shop; see Figure 3) kept standing and safe for visitor viewing from the outside. The stamp mill, dynamite shed, and associated machinery would be retained in their present, deteriorating condition.

The site would be viewed as a non-official historic setting and would be used periodically for interpretive walks as an example of a gold miner's cabin. The overall appearance of the area would remain the same as it is today. However, safety hazards would be removed and no utilities would be in place to provide power or sewerage. The buildings would remain vacant, although the welding shop would continue to be used as a secure storage facility. Over time, the buildings would suffer from benign neglect since they would receive only the minimal maintenance required to keep them structurally sound. They will be removed if they become unsafe. The site would be managed eventually as a "ruin" for interpretive purposes as the structures further deteriorate. As deterioration progresses, any newly discovered hazards (such as, eventually, the 1921 homestead chimney) would be evaluated by the park and repaired, if necessary, to ensure a safe environment for site visitors.

Vegetation would be cleared from around the buildings every year to reduce the threat of wildfire, but the majority of the three-acre site would return to dense chaparral with a pine forest overstory. A few of the bulldozed roads through the property would be scarified and revegetated in places, but only in areas where the function of wetland or riparian areas would be deemed at risk. No efforts would be made to restore landform contours; however, non-recreational roads (short, dirt roads on site that do not lead outside the property) would be scarified and revegetated to decrease adverse effects of erosion. The two metal refuse piles remaining on the property would be left in place and these would remain viewable through periodic brush clearing. Law enforcement rangers would routinely patrol the site to prevent illicit activity and vandalism. This area would be monitored more closely than other non-developed areas of the park due to the presence of the structures and metal refuse piles. Minor maintenance would be required to keep the structures safe for visitors to walk around and to deal with any periodic storm damage.

For reasons of visitor safety and resources protection, the bridge crossing Grizzly Gulch Creek adjacent to the McDermott Property site would be removed. A number of roads were developed by the McDermott family originating on site and extending into the adjacent lands beyond the property. Since these roads were developed for mineral exploration and extraction, they do not meet the current resource management and protection goals of the park. They are currently overgrown with vegetation, and in places very eroded, making them impassible. For these reasons, rocks will be placed in the roads to prevent access. However, the portion of the County road passing through the property will remain open for public use.

ALTERNATIVE B (NATURAL RESTORATION)

Under this alternative, the McDermott Property would be cleared of all structures. The cabin, the shop shed and the welding shop, all from historic Whiskeytown, and other associated outbuildings and refuse piles would be cleared. Old bulldozed roads running through the property would be scarified and revegetated. The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek would be removed due to its unsafe condition. The waste rock piles would be leveled and landforms would be restored to their natural contours as much as possible. The chimney structure from the 1921 homestead would be removed from the meadow and any trace of man-made artifacts or debris would be removed. All electrical systems, fences, pipelines, and post and cement foundations would be removed. Historic mining equipment components (stamp mill, drill bits, etc.) would be evaluated to determine whether they should be retained by the park and possibly moved to the El Dorado Mine in the Tower House National Historic District or to other park storage facilities. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, would also be reduced.

The purpose of this natural restoration of the site would be to enhance safety, increase habitat for wildlife, and to restore natural processes in a disturbed, developed site within the park. Surface hydrology would be restored and revegetation, using native plants, would improve the scenic and habitat potential of the site.

A number of roads were developed by the McDermott family originating on site and extending into the adjacent lands beyond the property. Since these roads were developed for mineral exploration and extraction, they do not meet the current resource management and protection goals of the park. They are currently overgrown with vegetation, and in places very eroded, making them impassible. For these reasons, rocks will be placed in the roads to prevent access.

Restoration of the site to its natural condition would have an initial up-front cost, but would afterward require little or no attention or funds from park managers. It is anticipated that Alternative B would require only the routine patrol required by any other piece of undeveloped land within the park boundary.

ALTERNATIVE C (ADAPTIVE REUSE FOR PARK OPERATIONS - PROPOSED ACTION)

Under this alternative, the McDermott cabin, shop shed and welding shop would be maintained as structures and used for park operations. Utilities and sewer lines would be connected so the buildings can be used for storage, park office space, park residences, or a combination of these. This alternative also includes developing portions of the site as exhibit areas for interpretive programs to discuss gold mining activities in the Whiskeytown area and as a plant nursery to support park revegetation activities.

For reasons of visitor safety and resources protection, the bridge crossing Grizzly Gulch Creek would be removed. A few roads developed by the McDermott family originate on site and extend into the adjacent lands beyond the property. Since these roads were developed by the McDermott's for mineral exploration and extraction, they do not meet the current resource management and protection goals of the park. They are currently overgrown with vegetation, and in places very eroded, making them impassible. For these reasons, rocks will be placed in the roads to prevent access and, as time and funding permit, they will be restored to a more natural state.

This alternative includes the removal of some of the small outbuildings (i.e., spring boxes, sheds, out house, well house) and some of the site features (i.e., garden areas, bulldozed mounds, waste rock piles) that are found to disrupt surface flow of water. The chimney in the meadow at the 1921 homestead location would remain but it would be stabilized and fenced for safety, thereby enabling it to serve as an important interpretive site for the property. Hazardous forest fuels on the entire site would be reduced to make the area safe in case of a wildfire. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced throughout the project site.

Remnant home-crafted machines created by Mr. Paul McDermott would be evaluated by the park for their interpretive potential, maintained or protected to reduce decay over time, and used to tell the story of this

unique family's history. The stamp mill shed structure would be rebuilt to protect the machinery and the stamp mill itself would be stabilized, but not necessarily restored to operating condition.

Under Alternative C, the site would be used for park operations, with moderate modification to the setting and site features. A park visitor would sense the historic setting of the cabin, workshop, and sheds, but the landscape would be slightly modified to partially return some of the disturbances to the natural processes on the site. While the cabin will be remodeled and improvements to other structures will be made, the buildings will remain similar in appearance from the outside to how they appear today.

The Environmentally-Preferred Alternative

The environmentally-preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "[t]he environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101..."

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- Assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
- Preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Alternative C, the proposed action, is the environmentally-preferred alternative because it offers both the restoration needed to return the natural physical and biological processes to the site while rehabilitating and preserving the cultural resources important to the site. Implementing either Alternative A or Alternative B would eventually result in a site that has lost some or all of its cultural resources through deterioration (since little/no maintenance of the site's buildings and materials would happen) or purposeful removal. Either result runs counter to both the goals of NEPA and those stated in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area's GMP.

With Alternative C, ground disturbance would be limited to restoring disturbed areas throughout the property back to their natural contours and replanting with native vegetation. Fuel reduction around structures would be instituted and maintained to make the area safe in case of wildfire. The three major buildings would be left intact so any rehabilitation or restoration that occurs would stabilize or halt their deterioration and disintegration. Furthermore, these structures would make a positive contribution to the park's need for additional facilities for administrative purposes or storage. Remnant home-crafted machines from Mr. McDermott's time would be kept on the property for interpretive purposes, and would be maintained or protected to reduce decay over time. The stamp mill shed would be rebuilt to protect the machinery inside and the stamp mill itself would be stabilized, but not necessarily restored to operating condition.

Mitigation Measures of Alternative C – Proposed Action

A construction zone for disturbed lands restoration would be delineated with construction tape or some similar material prior to any restoration activity. This visible border would define the zone and confine activity to a minimum area required for construction activities. All protection measures would be clearly detailed in the construction specifications and workers would be instructed to avoid conducting activities beyond the zone as defined by the border. In addition, the National Park Service would ensure that all contractors and subcontractors are informed that damage to resources outside the scope of work is subject to prosecution, fine, restitution costs, and other penalties.

Soil and rock cast aside during disturbed lands restoration would be susceptible to some erosion but standard erosion control measures, such as temporary silt fences, sand bags, or straw mulching would be used, as necessary, to minimize any potential soil erosion. To avoid introduction of exotic plant species, no hay bales would be used to control soil erosion since these often contain seeds of undesirable or harmful exotic plant species. Therefore, only Certified Weed-Free rice or wheat straw will be used to cover all disturbed soil. Yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) is the only known exotic plant species of concern that could increase as a result of construction and recontouring activities on the property. Populations of this plant will be treated prior to any disturbance to decrease their seedbed. Equipment and tools will be cleaned before use in the area and after use in the known areas of star thistle infestation. Monitoring and follow-up treatment will be conducted for several years following project completion to control further spread of yellow star thistle.

Excavated soil would be used for disturbed land restoration. Local borrow material for additional contouring, if required, would be sterile and weed free. Any excess material generated from disturbed land restoration would be stockpiled in the park's storage area for future use in approved projects or disposed at approved sites outside the park.

The discovery of previously unknown archeological resources will halt all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the resources are identified, documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990 would be followed.

Fueling of all construction vehicles and equipment would occur outside of the McDermott Property site.

The National Park Service adopted the concept of sustainable design as a guiding principle for facility planning and development. The objectives of sustainability are to design National Park Service facilities to:

- minimize adverse effects on natural and cultural values,
- reflect their environmental setting,
- maintain and encourage biodiversity,
- construct and retrofit facilities using energy-efficient materials and building techniques,
- operate and maintain facilities to promote their sustainability, and
- illustrate and promote conservation principles and practices through the sustainable design and ecologically sensitive use.

Essentially, sustainability is living within the environment by having the least impact on the environment. The proposed action subscribes to and supports the practice of sustainable planning, design, and use of the McDermott Property site.

Actions Common to Several or All the Alternatives

Regardless of which alternative is selected, the National Park Service will remove all hazardous waste materials from the McDermott Property site. Specifically, removal of residual mercury left from ore processing in and around the stamp mill and waste rock piles will be undertaken wherever it has been detected. Testing for residual mercury will be conducted inside the cabin as well in the event that gold processing occurred there. Asbestos shingles will be removed from inside the cabin and the interior will be cleaned of all asbestos dust. The cement spring boxes will be removed to restore riparian areas to a more natural state in Alternatives B and C.

For reasons of visitor safety and resources protection, the bridge crossing Grizzly Gulch Creek adjacent to the McDermott Property site will be removed as a part of all three alternatives. A number of roads developed by the McDermott family originate on site and extend into the adjacent lands beyond the property. Since these roads were developed by the McDermott's for mineral exploration and extraction, they do not meet the current resource management and protection goals of the park. Currently, vegetation has overgrown these roads and they are highly eroded from lack of maintenance, making them impassible. For these reasons, in all three alternatives, they will be barricaded and, as time and funding permit, restored to a more natural state.

Hazardous forest fuels would be removed around the structures in Alternatives A and C to lower the risk of wildland fire damage or destruction. The shaded fuel break that passes through the McDermott Property site will be maintained as determined in the park's Fire Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

The site would be used for interpretive purposes in both Alternatives A and C; however, as the site continues to deteriorate, through little or not maintenance to buildings and materials, under Alternative A, its effectiveness as an interpretive site would continue to decline.

Table 1. Comparative Summary of Alternatives and the Extent to Which Each Alternative Meets Project Objectives.

Project Description	Alternative A – No Action	Alternative B – Natural Restoration	Alternative C – Adaptive Reuse for Park Operations
Key Elements of the Alternative	Site's cabin, shop shed, and welding shop left standing and safe for outside viewing by visitors. The original 1921 homestead's chimney will be left in place and monitored for safety. The stamp mill, dynamite shed, garden shed and associated machinery will be sustained in their current condition which will allow them to deteriorate through benign neglect. Only maintenance needed for the safety of visitors and security will be provided.	The site will be cleared of all structures and refuse piles. Existing roads will be scarified and revegetated. Waste rock piles leveled and natural contours will be restored. The original homestead's chimney and any trace of man-made artifacts or debris will be removed. All electrical systems, fences, pipelines, post and cement foundations will be removed. Historic mining equipment components (stamp mill, drill bits, etc.) will be evaluated to determine if they should be retained and moved to another location.	The cabin, shop shed, and welding shop will be rehabilitated and used for park operations (storage, park office space, park residence). This alternative also includes developing portions of the site as exhibit areas for interpretive programs to discuss gold mining activities in the Whiskeytown area and as a plant nursery to support park revegetation activities. The site's natural processes will be restored.
Project Objectives To Be Met	Alternative A – No Action	Alternative B – Natural Restoration	Alternative – C Adaptive Reuse for Park Operations
<p>Hazardous Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mercury and other substances removed o Asbestos removed <p>Disturbed Lands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Land contours restored o Drainage patterns and riparian areas restored o Existing roads scarified and recontoured <p>Hazardous Forest Fuels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Clearance of excess forest fuels <p>Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Limit access to remote areas by gating non-recreational roads o Removal of Grizzly Gulch Creek bridge o Security against vandalism and illegal use o Site safe for visitor access 	<p>Because this alternative will involve managing the McDermott site as is currently happening, the only project objectives that will be met are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All hazardous materials and asbestos will be removed o Existing roads scarified and revegetated o Hazardous forest fuels will continue to be removed from around the structures o The non-recreational roads existing on the site will be barricaded. o The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek will be removed o Current patterns of park ranger patrol will be retained o Structures and materials on site not maintained but kept in present condition and managed for safety 	<p>This alternative involves essentially clearing the site of all structures and man-made artifacts and will meet the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All hazardous materials and asbestos will be removed o Drainage pattern and riparian area restoration will help bring the site back to its natural state o Existing roads will be scarified and revegetated o Only routine forest fuels removal like that of other areas in the park. o The non-recreational roads existing on the site will be barricaded. o The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek will be removed o All manmade structure and materials removed from site for safety considerations 	<p>All of the project objectives will be met in this alternative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Hazardous materials and asbestos will be removed o Land contours restored to resemble natural state o Drainage patterns and riparian areas will be restored to natural conditions o The non-recreational roads existing on the site will be barricaded. o Existing roads will be scarified, recontoured and revegetated as time and funding permit o Hazardous forest fuels will continue to be cleared o The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek will be removed o Security against vandalism and illegal use will be retained and upgraded to further enhance the protection of park resources o Existing structures utilized to enhance park operations and promote safety

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Specialists in the National Park Service identified issues and concerns affecting the elements of the environment in the area where the proposed action will take place. These elements of the affected environment are discussed as impact topics since they form the issues of concern that could be affected by the range of alternatives. Specific impact topics were developed to ensure that alternatives were compared on the basis of the most relevant topics. The following impact topics were identified on the basis of federal laws, regulations, orders, National Park Service *Management Policies 2001*, and from input by the public. A brief rationale for the selection of each impact topic is given below, as well as the rationale for dismissing specific topics from further consideration.

Among scoping session participants, there was interest in using the site as a religious retreat and a horticultural and environmental facility that would utilize the house and outbuildings for equipment and photo displays. Others expressed a desire to return the area to a natural landscape, including the removal of the main cabin and outbuildings. The scoping sessions were not heavily attended and most participants did not have strong feelings on what the park should do with the area.

IMPACT TOPICS ANALYZED IN THIS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Visitor Use and Safety

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area receives approximately 700,000 visitors a year; most of whom utilize the lake and its shoreline for their recreational activities. Approximately 150,000 of these visitors use the backcountry hiking trails throughout the year, with most use occurring in the spring and fall months. Currently, the McDermott Property site does not attract many visitors. Low visitation is primarily due to the fact that few visitors realize this is part of the park and nothing in the area is signed or interpreted to acquaint the visitor with this fact. The occasional visitor to the site might be gold panning, hunting, or searching for abandoned mines. National Park Service maintenance personnel servicing the sewer treatment plant that is immediately south of the McDermott Property site are the only regular visitors to the site. Grizzly Gulch Road, which bisects the site, is a gravel, rock and dirt road managed by Shasta County. This primitive County road takes visitors up Grizzly Gulch to the North Star Mine and then east over a ridge into Whiskey Creek watershed. Only four wheel drive vehicles with high clearance can get through on this steep, rough road and users must ford Whiskey Creek and cross private land to gain access to a paved road. Despite the turn lane off Highway 299, once the visitor in an automobile accesses the site, she/he would not get the idea that this road leads to anything of interest to park visitors since there are no parking areas, signs, or visible trails; rather, the visitor feels like a trespasser.

The area is generally safe to visit with no immediate hazards to visitors walking through the property. Residual mercury remaining in the soil at specific locations from the on-site gold mining operation is a passive hazard for anyone coming in contact with soil. The park is currently analyzing and cleaning the site of this known hazard. The greatest known hazard at the site is the structural integrity of the buildings and gold mining processing equipment that could collapse from deferred maintenance.

The National Park Service removed all known hazardous material (with the exception of the residual mercury) and refuse. This included 88 tons of large steel plates, 3 large dumpsters of household and welding shop refuse, 1167 pounds of glass, dynamite, blasting caps, batteries, motor oil, and miscellaneous household hazardous waste material.

Park Operations

Since park responsibility for the three-acre site is fairly recent (2002), the site has not been utilized to support park operations. The site was a private residence and a work site for a small mine processing mill for over 80 years. It has been left vacant since park clean up of the site was initiated. Short-term

actions taken by the park included removing the known hazardous waste materials, disconnecting electricity and water, addressing structural hazards on the site, and repairing random acts of vandalism.

Wildlife

Wildlife species that frequent the Grizzly Gulch area where the site is located include black bear, black-tailed deer, raccoon, gray fox, western gray squirrel, California ground squirrel, mountain lion, bobcat, and ringtail. Foothill yellow-legged frogs, pacific chorus frogs, northwestern pond turtles, pacific giant salamanders, and the exotic bullfrog can be found within or directly adjacent to Grizzly Gulch Creek. Numerous resident and migratory birds can be found in and around the site as well. The most common resident species include the Stellar's jay, scrub jay, common raven, acorn woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, northern flicker, Bewick's wren, spotted towhee, black phoebe, and California quail. Bird species that are common seasonally include the band-tailed pigeon, black-throated gray warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, American robin, dark-eyed junco, house finch, Brewer's blackbird, plain titmouse, black-headed grosbeak, and ash-throated flycatcher. The green heron, great-blue heron, and kingfisher are fairly common around the cove area directly north of Highway 299. Some waterfowl species also use this cove area seasonally. The most common are buffleheads, mallards, hooded mergansers, and common mergansers.

Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species

The Endangered Species Act requires, in part, that the federal government identify, protect, and institute programs to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. An endangered species is one in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened species is one likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

Whiskeytown NRA contains two listed fish species, the Sacramento River spring-run chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Central Valley steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). These anadromous fish species are both listed as "threatened" and both occur only within Clear Creek below Whiskeytown Dam. Since the McDermott Property site is located above Whiskeytown Dam, no anadromous fish have been able to access Grizzly Gulch Creek since Whiskeytown Dam was completed in 1963. None of the fish species found in Whiskeytown Lake or Grizzly Gulch Creek are considered threatened, endangered, or sensitive.

The park has two resident federally-listed threatened wildlife species, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). The bald eagle and the northern spotted owl both have successful fledging records within Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. No suitable habitat exists for northern spotted owls in or near the project area and the nearest known activity center is approximately 5 miles southwest of the site. Two pairs of bald eagles nest along Whiskeytown Lake and utilize all areas of the lake for foraging. One pair traditionally nests in the Brandy Creek or Boulder Creek drainage and the other traditionally nests in an area near Dog Gulch. The nearest historic nest site is approximately 1.5 miles south of the project area and no suitable nesting habitat exists in or near the project area. Suitable nesting habitat for bald eagles in Shasta County generally consists of stands of large, dominant ponderosa pines which do not occur near the McDermott tract. A substantial wintering population of migrating bald eagles is sometimes present and they utilize all areas of the reservoir for foraging including Grizzly Gulch Cove within the project site located directly north of Highway 299.

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area contains potential habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, but there have not been any documented sightings within the park. Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) is a necessary habitat component for the beetle but has only been found within the park near Upper Clear Creek along Trinity Mountain Road, several miles from the proposed project site. A recent survey within the project site found no elderberry shrubs present.

Vegetation

The park contains about 39,000 acres (16,000 hectares) of mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands, and chaparral. The wetland habitats include a 3,200 acre (1,300 hectare) seasonally managed reservoir and less than 200 acres (80 hectares) of riparian vegetation along the park's many small streams. The park has numerous species of exotic plants such as yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and scotch broom (*Genista monspessulana*). The park is currently working on reduction or elimination of several priority-target exotic plant species in identified locations to eliminate as much exotic seed spread as possible. The McDermott Property site has been thinned of chaparral and there are numerous gray pines on site. The site also contains numerous exotic plants, especially Himalayan blackberry, and these will need to be reduced. There is a springhouse and several watercourses with riparian vegetation on the property.

Threatened or Endangered Plant Species

None of the 16 known plant species of special concern (threatened, endangered, candidate, or sensitive species) found in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area are known to occur in the area of the McDermott Property site. The park botanist conducted two botanical surveys during 2001-2002 in the project area.

Water Resources (Water Quality, Wetlands, and Floodplains)

National Park Service policies require protection of water quality consistent with the Clean Water Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prohibit or regulate, through a permitting process, discharge of dredged or fill material or excavation within U.S. waters. Proposed actions that have the potential to adversely impact water quality, through the discharge of dredged or fill material or excavations, must be addressed in a Statement of Findings. Additionally, two Executive Orders are germane to this action. Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*, requires all federal agencies to avoid construction within the 100-year floodplain unless no other practicable alternative exists. Certain construction within a 100-year floodplain requires preparation of a Statement of Findings. Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, requires federal agencies to avoid, where possible, adversely impacting wetlands. Proposed actions that have the potential to adversely impact wetlands must also be addressed in a Statement of Findings.

Grizzly Gulch Creek flows through the western boundary of the McDermott Property site. This is a high gradient (steep grade) stream with a defined channel and mature riparian vegetation throughout its corridor. Waste rock piles can be found along the creek banks; however, the channel has no man-made restriction until it empties into Grizzly Gulch Cove, an arm of Whiskeytown Lake (see Figure 2). During the winter, the reservoir is lowered, extending the length of the creek 100 or more feet before reaching the lake. Fluvial debris (stream gravels and small boulders) empties into the cove's upper end close to the stream's mouth as the gradient of the channel levels out. Bulldozing of stream gravels and some evidence of hydraulic mining is evident along the lower end of Grizzly Gulch Creek. Most stream channel alterations occurred back in the 1950s and 1960s prior to the park being established. Overall, the stream channel is close to its natural condition since numerous storms and high water events have swept through in the past 40 years. At the upper end of the property, an old metal-framed, railroad-tie bridge crosses Grizzly Gulch Creek (see Figure 3).

A small intermittent spring emerges from the hill slope just east of the McDermott cabin. The spring's flow passes by the vegetable garden area, located just east of the cabin, crossing the dirt road below the cabin and then empties into Grizzly Gulch Cove. This spring seep dries up by June and does not have a defined channel. It disperses into grassland with willows and other riparian vegetation indicating its intermittent presence.

The upper meadow where the Richard A. and Lily Mae McDermott homestead site existed has a densely vegetated spring seep that has been tapped into a cement spring box enclosed by a well house (see Figure 3). Installation of this spring box has interrupted the natural flow and channel of this spring.

The proposed action will not discharge dredged or fill material into or require excavation in the waters of the U.S. A Statement of Findings will not be prepared and an Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit will not be requested. Additionally, the proposed action will have no impacts to floodplains or wetlands and therefore a Statement of Findings for these resources will not be prepared.

Due to past land use for mining activities the site was identified as a source of potential contamination for mercury, SVOC's (Semivolatile Organic Compound), and other metals. Three studies have been performed to characterize the condition of the site for these potential waste products with include a Preliminary Assessment (PA), Site Investigation (SI), and a draft Supplemental Site Investigation (SSI). As a result of these investigations, it has been shown that low levels of mercury and SVOC's contamination exists in the soil, however locations are well away for water channels and the concentrations below Federal and State limits for clean-up. Consequently, it is not considered a threat to water quality, wetlands, or floodplains and will not be addressed in the Water Resource Impacts section.

Geology and Soils

According to the National Park Service's *Management Policies 2001* (2000), the National Park Service will strive to understand and preserve the soil resources of park units and to prevent, to the extent possible, the unnatural erosion, physical removal, or contamination of the soil or its contamination of other resources.

The bedrock geology of this small site is Copley-Greenstone and the associated soils found within the site are highly erosive. The predominant soil type in the area of the McDermott Property site is sandy to silty loam. Permeability of this soil type is high until water movement encounters the fractured bedrock below. The hazard of blowing soil is low.

Since the re-contouring of landforms on the site may be an action included in several of the following alternatives, soils will be addressed as an impact topic.

As stated in the previous section, recent studies have shown that low levels of mercury and SVOC contamination exist in the soil but are below Federal and State limits requiring clean-up and no remedial actions are recommended. However, it is recommended in the SSI, as a precautionary measure, that the fenced area where the mercury contamination was detected remain off-limits to the public until such time as the mercury has degraded or an over layer of surface soil or vegetation has been added as part of the proposed site renovation. In all alternatives, the fencing will remain in place until the contaminated soils are completely removed. For this reason soil contamination will not be addressed in the Soils and Geology Impacts or Public Safety Impacts Section.

Cultural Resources

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area encompasses a variety of cultural resources. Over 6,000 years of occupation by Native Americans has resulted in a number of terraces, refuse mounds, and middens that primarily comprise the prehistoric landscape. In addition to the prehistoric resources, historic resources are associated with 19th century mining and associated community development activities (road construction, residences, and agricultural developments).

National Park Service archeologists and cultural historians have studied the McDermott Property site since the McDermott family released the property on December 31, 2001. In December 2001, a National Park Service archeologist inspected the site and made some recommendations on how to clean up the site. The archeologist determined that historic artifacts left behind were of interest, but did not warrant listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Park staff went to great lengths to ensure the McDermott family was able to remove all the items they wished to keep; however, much was left on site.

All of this material was sorted, inspected and stored for future museum cataloguing or removed and recycled.

There are four recorded prehistoric archaeological sites in the vicinity of the McDermott Property site. All four were recorded by A. Treganza (1958) as a part of a salvage archaeology effort prior to the construction and flooding of the Whiskeytown reservoir. The site survey records indicate the possible location of a Native American village site in the vicinity, although, with the exception of one site, the creation of Whiskeytown Reservoir has likely destroyed these sites. Treganza noted that all of the sites had been impacted by either placer mining or home construction. Given that the four sites were described as possible village sites (more probably one single village), there is a moderate possibility that cultural remains may be disturbed in achieving the goals of the project. Since ground disturbance at the McDermott Property site is already extensive, the provenience of located cultural materials would have to be carefully investigated to be sure they had not been brought to their present location by the former property owner. Additionally, the remaining prehistoric site should be relocated and the site record should be updated to more accurately describe the context and significance of the site.

Two locally-significant historic items found on the property are original buildings from the town of Oak Bottom (a wooden shed) and the Whiskeytown Welding Shop. In addition, a stamp mill that operated as late as 1996, with components that likely date back to the California Gold Rush, was also left on the property. According to Richard McDermott, both he and his brother purchased stamp mills from a metal scrap yard in Redding in the late 1940s. Paul McDermott's, the one on the site, is a two-piston stamp mill. This stamp mill is important to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area because it is one of two the park now owns. Over 40 stamp mills were in operation in the Whiskeytown area back in the California Gold Rush Era.

Some California Gold Rush Era tools were found on the property including hand forged square nails, rakes, shovels, star drill bits and gold pans. Most of these items were rusting and broken, but have potential as display items and were retained. A 1915 Worthington generator machine used in mining operations was retained for eventual interpretive use.

While evidence of Native American occupancy near the project site exists, there does not appear to be any impacts to them from the various alternatives examined for this project. Additionally, while the mining along Grizzly Gulch Creek dates back to the 1850s and the California Gold Rush Era, the property's ownership by the McDermott's has disturbed and transformed any physical evidence of this past. Despite the unique character of many of the tools and machines invented, built, and used by the McDermott's in their mining exploration, homesteading, transportation, and water developments, these do not appear to represent culturally significant links to the historical makeup of the northern California region, California or the United States. If additional cultural resources are found on site, both the National Park Service archeologists and the California State Historic Preservation Officer will be consulted.

IMPACT TOPICS DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

Prime and Unique Farmlands

In August 1980, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) directed that federal agencies must assess the effects of their actions on farmland soils classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime or unique. Prime or unique farmland is defined as soil that particularly produces general crops such as common foods, forage, fiber, and oil seed; unique farmland produces specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. According to NRCS, none of the soils in the project area are classified as prime and unique farmlands. Therefore, prime and unique farmlands was dismissed as an impact topic in this assessment.

Soundscape Management

In accordance with National Park Service *Management Policies* (2001) and Director's Order #47, *Sound Preservation and Noise Management*, an important part of the National Park Service mission is preservation of natural soundscapes associated with national park units. Natural soundscapes exist in the absence of human-caused sound. The natural ambient soundscape is the aggregate of all the natural sounds that occur in park units, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds. Natural sounds occur within and beyond the range of sounds that humans can perceive and can be transmitted through air, water, or solid materials. The frequencies, magnitudes, and durations of human-caused sound considered acceptable varies among National Park Service units, as well as potentially throughout each park unit, being generally greater in developed areas and less in undeveloped areas.

Hauling material, operating equipment, and other construction activities could result in dissonant, human-caused sounds. However, all construction activity associated with this project would occur in the developed area of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, where protection of a natural ambient soundscape and/or opportunity for visitors to experience natural sound environments is not an objective. Due to the adjacent developed zone at Oak Bottom, which is the most developed area of the park, the close proximity of Highway 299, and a nearby wastewater treatment facility that runs 24 hours a day, visitors would not come to the site seeking the quieter, intermittent sounds of nature. Any dissonant sounds associated with construction would be temporary, lasting only as long as the construction activity which generated the sound, and would negligibly impact visitor enjoyment of the area.

Lightscape Management

In accordance with National Park Service *Management Policies* (2001), the National Park Service strives to preserve natural ambient lightscapes, which are natural resources and values that exist in the absence of human caused light. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area strives to limit the use of artificial outdoor lighting to that which is necessary for basic safety requirements and to ensure that all outdoor lighting is shielded to the maximum extent possible, to keep light on the intended subject and out of the night sky. Power to the McDermott site has been disconnected so the proposed actions would not affect the lighting situation on the McDermott Property site; therefore lightscape management was dismissed as an impact topic.

Socioeconomic Environment

The proposed action would neither change local or regional land use nor impact local businesses or other agencies. While the project could open up a 3-acre site to the public, this additional opportunity for recreation would have a negligible affect on park visitation. Therefore, the socioeconomic environment will not be addressed as an impact topic in this assessment.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, "General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities. The proposed action would not have disproportionate health or environmental effects on minorities or low-income populations or communities as defined in the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Guidance (1998). Therefore, environmental justice was dismissed as an impact topic in this assessment.

IMPACTS

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING IMPACTS

Effects of the Alternatives

Potential impacts are described in terms of **type** (Are the effects beneficial or adverse?), **context** (Are the effects direct or indirect, site-specific, local, or even regional?), **duration** (Are the effects short-term: lasting less than one year, or long-term: lasting more than one year?), and **intensity** (Are the effects negligible, minor, moderate, or major?). Because the definitions of intensity (negligible, minor, moderate, or major) vary by impact topic, intensity definitions are provided separately for each impact topic analyzed in this environmental assessment.

In addition, the National Park Service's *Management Policies, 2001* (2000) requires analysis of potential effects to determine whether or not actions would impair park resources. The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. National Park Service managers must always seek ways to avoid or minimize to the greatest degree practicable, adversely impacting park resources and values. However, the laws do give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park, as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within a park, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible National Park Service manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values. An impact to any park resource or value may constitute impairment, but an impact would be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent that it has a major or severely adverse effect upon a resource or value whose conservation is:

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park;
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or
- identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents.

Impairment may not result from National Park Service activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park. A determination on impairment is made in the *Impacts* section for Visitor Use and Safety, Park Operations, Wildlife and Vegetation, Threatened and Endangered Species, Water Resources, Cultural Resources, and Geology and Soils.

Type of Impact

Adverse: *Likely to result in unnatural or detrimental changes to the resource.*

Beneficial: *Likely to protect, improve, and /or restore the resource.*

Duration of Impact

Short-term: *Immediate changes to the resource where the effects last one year (season).*

Intermediate-term: *Immediate changes to the resource where the effects last two to five years.*

Long-term: *Immediate changes to the resource where the effects last more than five years.*

Intensity of Impact

Negligible: Imperceptible or undetectable impacts.

Minor: Slightly perceptible, and limited in extent. Without further impacts, adverse impacts would reverse and the resources would recover.

Moderate: Readily apparent, but limited in extent. Without further impacts, most adverse impacts would eventually reverse and the resource would recover. The impacts are localized in scale.

Major: Substantial, highly noticeable, and affecting a large area. Changes would not reverse without active management. The impacts are landscape-level in scale.

Impairment: a major, adverse impact to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Cumulative Impacts

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 USC 4321 *et seq.*), require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative impacts are defined as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative impacts are considered for all alternatives.

Cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of each alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the area of the project. Therefore, it was necessary to identify other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future projects at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and, if applicable, the surrounding region. Within the next decade, the park plans a series of development improvements in the vicinity of the Oak Bottom area. These projects include rehabilitating the Oak Bottom Campground, infrastructure upgrades to the water treatment facility, improving recreation trails and swim beaches, and upgrading the park's nursery facility. In addition, the management of the Oak Bottom campground facility is currently undergoing a bid process and there may be a change in concession management. A portion of the concession operation is adjacent to the McDermott Property site. The park's new fire cache will improve response time for structure protection on the north side of the park, where the McDermott structures reside. None of these actions are likely to increase visitation to the project site.

Impacts to Cultural Resources and §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In this environmental assessment, impacts to historic structures are described in terms of type, context, duration, and intensity, as described above, which is consistent with the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These impact analyses are intended, however, to comply with the requirements of both NEPA and §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations implementing §106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800, *Protection of Historic Properties*), impacts to archeological resources and the cultural landscape were identified and evaluated by:

- (1) determining the area of potential effects;
- (2) identifying cultural resources present in the area of potential effects that were either listed in
or
eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
- (3) applying the criteria of adverse effect to affected cultural resources either listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register; and
- (4) considering ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects.

Under the Advisory Council's regulations, a determination of either *adverse effect* or *no adverse effect* must also be made for affected, National Register eligible cultural resources. An *adverse effect* occurs whenever an impact alters, directly or indirectly, any characteristic of a cultural resource that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register; e.g., diminishing the integrity of the resource's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Adverse effects also include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the preferred alternative that would occur later in time, be farther removed in distance or be cumulative (36 CFR Part 800.5, *Assessment of Adverse Effects*). A determination of *no adverse effect* means there is an effect, but the effect would not diminish in any way the characteristics of the cultural resource that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register.

CEQ regulations and the National Park Service's *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-making* (Director's Order 12) also call for a discussion of the appropriateness of mitigation, as well as an analysis of how effective the mitigation would be in reducing the intensity of a potential impact; e.g., reducing the intensity of an impact from major to moderate or minor. Any resultant reduction in intensity of impact due to mitigation, however, is an estimate of the effectiveness of mitigation under NEPA only. It does not suggest that the level of effect as defined by §106 is similarly reduced. Although adverse effects under §106 may be mitigated, the effect remains adverse.

A §106 summary is included in the impact analysis sections for archeological resources and the cultural landscape under the preferred alternative. The §106 Summary is intended to meet the requirements of §106 and is an assessment of the effect of the undertaking (implementation of the alternative) on cultural resources, based upon the criterion of effect and criteria of adverse effect found in the Advisory Council's regulations.

Impairment Summary Statement

The National Park Service must consider the impacts of each alternative to determine if the described action would lead to an impairment of resources as discussed in the National Park Service Organic Act and the General Authorities Act. If there would be impairment the action may not be approved. Impairment is an impact that would harm the integrity of park resources or values (NPS Management Policies 2001). Not all impacts constitute impairment. Severity, duration, and timing of the impact help determine whether the integrity of a park resource or value would be irreparably compromised. No alternative discussed in this document has a specific goal that could result in impairment of a park resource. If there would be impairment the action will not be approved, and the selected alternative would be amended before preparing the decision document.

VISITOR USE AND SAFETY

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Because the McDermott Property site's future is currently being determined, visitors are not encouraged to visit the site nor are they given any indication that the site is even there since no signage along Highway 299 exists nor does the site appear in the literature given out to park visitors. Therefore, the effects of Alternative A will continue to be adverse since what resources the site does contain are not currently safe nor easily accessible by the visitor and hence, remain mostly unseen. Despite high visitation to the nearby Oak Bottom developed area, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on visitor use since visitors seldom visit the McDermott Property site. Because the site will continue to deteriorate, the effect of this alternative on Visitor Use will be long-term but negligible since the "story" this site, in its presently deteriorating state, could tell is perhaps more effectively told in other areas of the park which have been interpreted.

Cumulative Impact: Because there is no construction or rehabilitation associated with the no action alternative and no attempt to attract visitors to the site will be made, the cumulative impact of this alternative's actions on Visitor Use and Safety, even when added to impacts from other projects in the area, will have negligible impact on Visitor Use and Safety.

Conclusion: Since there will be no major improvements to the McDermott Property site, rather, its resources will continue to deteriorate and only be maintained to preclude them from being a hazard to visitors, the “story” this site could tell will not be developed. The effects of Alternative A will have a long-term, adverse impact on visitor use since the resources on the McDermott Property site could constitute an important link in the local history of the region that will never be realized. The removal of the bridge across Grizzly Gulch Creek will enhance safety to the visitors who do access the site. The barricading of the site’s non-recreational roads will have a negligible effect on visitors to the site since these roads are off-limits and it would be illegal to access these roads.

Effects of Alternatives B (Natural Restoration)

The impacts on visitor use will be the same as Alternative A, except the site will be made safer. The removal of structures and refuse piles which both attract visitors but can pose hazards will be beneficial. Likewise, removing the bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek and barricading existing non-recreational roads will enhance the safety of the site. However, any potential the site contains for interpretive use for visitors will be lost forever. This impact will be negligible since few visitors access the site and know anything about the story it could tell.

Cumulative Impacts: Once the McDermott Property site’s structures and materials are removed, the site will return to as natural a condition as possible. While the process of structure and materials removal will produce impacts that will be site-specific and short term, the lasting impacts on Visitor Use and Safety from this and other area projects will be negligible.

Conclusion: While Alternative B will remove structures and utilities from the McDermott Property site, thus making it safer for visitors, the site will no longer have any interpretive potential that could attract visitors to the site. It is, therefore, likely that the site will disappear back into its natural state, making it like many others in the park. In terms of meeting the establishing legislation’s goals for Whiskeytown NRA, this alternative will delete a potentially important piece of the Whiskeytown story. The long-term minor beneficial effect of increased visitor safety will be balanced by the long-term, adverse impact of visitors losing the opportunity to learn about the history of this site.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action)

This alternative involves restoring and rehabilitating the structures on the site and interpreting these to tell the story of a pioneering family to the Whiskeytown area and their efforts to live on and with the land and its resources. While the structures themselves will be used for administrative purposes, they will be retained in their original condition outside but made habitable on the inside. By restoring the site, as much as practical and possible, the visitor to the site will get a sense of the site’s history from the structures and materials interpreted on the site. The impacts from this alternative on visitor use and safety are direct, minor, and long-term since this site will add a different view of the use of Whiskeytown’s resources by a “common” miner and his descendants rather than that of the more affluent and influential Tower and Camden families. Since NPS policies foster the retention of buildings that have had historical importance to the area, even if they are not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, the adaptive reuse of the McDermott Property site’s buildings is very much in keeping with the enabling legislation of Whiskeytown NRA.

Cumulative Impacts: This alternative will involve renovating structures and upgrading infrastructure at the McDermott Property site. The only lasting impact will be that of some increased traffic at the Oak Bottom intersection as visitors and professionals access the site at the same time as visitors turn left at this intersection to get to Oak Bottom. However, these impacts are seen to be minor but long-term in consequence.

Conclusion: The impacts from this alternative on Visitor Use and Safety will generally be beneficial since the site will be preserved and accessible to visitors. There will be some short-term, minor, adverse impacts related to additional construction in the Oak Bottom area, but the long-term minor adverse impact

of increased traffic in offset by the beneficial impact of providing visitors with an important interpretive opportunity.

PARK OPERATIONS

For the purposes of this document, park operations is defined as the day-to-day work schedule and planning for the staff of Whiskeytown NRA. It includes the Divisions of Administration, Interpretation, Ranger Activities, Maintenance, and Natural Resources Management. The park superintendent presides over the daily activities of the park staff and is the final decision-maker in nearly all of the key issues affecting the park's welfare, direction, and visitor experience.

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Currently, park operations are negligibly impacted by the McDermott Property site. The site's structures receive little to no maintenance and this is given only to keep the structures stable and non-hazardous. Materials of potential interest or value on the site are stored in the workshop and park rangers regularly visit the site to be sure it is secure. Removing the bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek and barricading the non-recreational roads will require some initial expenditure of resources by the maintenance staff and this will have a minor, short-term adverse impact on park operations. The site is periodically cleared of hazardous forest fuels but this activity is felt to be a negligible impact on park operations. This program of security and maintenance will be long-term as the site continues to deteriorate, but there will be a minor beneficial effect on park operations since the site will no longer need routine inspection by maintenance and law enforcement staff.

Even during periods of high visitation to the Oak Bottom area, there will be no impact on park operations at this site since the buildings will continue to be unused for park operations and there will be no changes in park staffing needed to maintain the status quo.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have no impact on park operations related to the McDermott property. No additional staff will be added or needed to manage the structures and assets associated with the property. Therefore, the cumulative impacts under Alternative A to park operations will remain negligible.

Conclusion: There will be minor short and long-term beneficial impacts to park operations resulting from the removal of hazardous materials and roads. Impacts resulting from future development in the area and the impacts from this alternative will produce negligible impacts to park operations.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

The adverse impacts on park operations from the removal of structures, refuse piles, and the bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek will be minor and short-term. Returning the site to a more natural state and barricading the non-recreational roads associated with the property will have a minor, long-term beneficial impact on park operations since the site will no longer need routine inspection by maintenance and law enforcement staff.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure when added to the removal of structures and materials from the McDermott Property site will produce minor adverse impacts on park operations. These will be short-term since this site, unlike that of Oak Bottom, is rarely used.

Conclusion: Since the site will be cleared of all structures and materials and returned, as much as possible, to its natural state, it will have increasingly less impact on park operations since few maintenance activities (only fuels reduction and exotic plant control) or security checks by park rangers will be required. Therefore, the adverse impacts, both short and long-term, will be minor.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Action)

Utilizing the buildings and structures remaining on the property for a variety of official uses will result in a long-term, moderately beneficial impact upon park operations by providing the park with numerous options to maximize the use of buildings, structures, and historically-interesting pieces of mining equipment and other artifacts to assist in better presenting the park's primary interpretive themes. Rehabilitating the structures for additional office and workspace, housing, or other administrative uses for the park staff or non-profit organizations will also provide a long-term benefit to park operations.

The adverse impacts on park operations from the rehabilitation of buildings and the re-contouring of site features will be moderate and long-term since the buildings will now require more maintenance and security than with Alternative A. Maintenance and security activities will have to be expanded to include this now accessible and usable site. However, the site will become both an attractive place to visit and to work or live. Rehabilitating the site will make it an asset to the park and will promote the goals of the NPS to retain and protect natural and cultural resources that are an important part of the park's purpose.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure when added to the renovation of structures and recontouring of site features at the McDermott Property site will produce minor impacts on park operations. However, having increased visitation to the site from nearby Oak Bottom may mean that minor, adverse impacts to law enforcement staff could result from disruptive activities by visitors to this newly-available historic site.

Conclusion: There will be direct impacts to park operations from rehabilitating the McDermott Property site for use by visitors, staff, and other professionals. . However, the benefits from having this site renovated and usable by the park for various activities will be major and long-term.

WILDLIFE

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Impacts to wildlife species under Alternative A will likely be negligible since the site receives little use on a day-to-day basis by either visitors or maintenance personnel. Some minor impacts in the form of temporary disturbance are likely, but most human activity will be in and around current structures which are not considered important habitat.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on wildlife. Cumulative impacts to wildlife under Alternative A will be negligible.

Conclusion: Long-term impacts to wildlife under Alternative A will be negligible, although there will be some minor, short-term, adverse impacts from maintenance and security activities.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

There will be some minor short-term adverse impacts from temporary disturbances during restoration of the site. As the landscape returns to its more natural conditions, some additional wildlife habitat will be created. As a result, it is expected that wildlife populations in the area could slightly increase, though this increase will likely be imperceptible due to the small amount of additional habitat that will be created by restoration. Additionally, it is unlikely that habitat will be created that differs substantially from the chaparral and knobcone pine habitat that is currently prevalent around the project site.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on wildlife. Cumulative impacts to wildlife under Alternative B will be negligible.

Conclusion: Impacts to wildlife under Alternative B will be the same as in Alternative A.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Action)

With additional human use of the site, it is likely that some additional disturbance to wildlife currently utilizing habitats in and around the site will increase. However, since the area is fairly small and does not offer unique habitats, it is likely that wildlife susceptible to human disturbance will temporarily disperse to other nearby areas that contain suitable habitat.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on wildlife. Cumulative impacts to wildlife under Alternative C will be negligible.

Conclusion: While the use of the site by wildlife may experience a moderate decrease, the impacts are expected to be minor due to the small size of the affected area and intermittent level of use by visitors and park staff. These impacts will be long-term and adverse.

There would be no impairment on wildlife as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIES

The actions proposed under all alternatives will not have the potential to impact Sacramento River spring-run chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead trout, or the northern spotted owl as these species do not occur near the project area and no potential habitat occurs near the project area. Spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout occur only within Clear Creek below Whiskeytown Dam and the nearest northern spotted owl activity center is located approximately 5 miles southwest of the project area. Additionally, although Whiskeytown National Recreation Area contains potential habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, there have not been any documented sightings within the park. Elderberry is a necessary habitat component for the beetle but has only been found within the park near Upper Clear Creek along Trinity Mountain Road, several miles from the proposed project site. A recent survey within the project site found no elderberry shrubs present.

Bald eagles have been documented to forage and perch within the project area and potential for impacts to this species does exist. Impacts generally are expected to be in the form of temporary disturbance during foraging or perching. Disturbance to nesting bald eagles is unlikely as the nearest historic nest is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the project site and no suitable nesting habitat occurs in or near the project area.

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Impacts to bald eagles under Alternative A will likely be negligible since the site receives little use on a day-to-day basis by either visitors or maintenance personnel, although some adverse impacts in the form of temporary disturbance are possible. It is also unlikely that these disturbances are substantial due to the fact that Highway 299 is located directly adjacent to the areas where eagles have been observed foraging or perching and these individuals are likely conditioned to some level of human-based noise and activity.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on bald eagles. Cumulative impacts to bald eagles under Alternative A will be negligible.

Conclusion: Long-term impacts to bald eagles under Alternative A will be negligible, although there will be some short-term, adverse impacts due to temporary disturbance from maintenance and security activities.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

Some minor short-term adverse impacts due to disturbance during restoration of the site is likely. Eagles may avoid the site during the use of heavy equipment and high levels of human activity, although Highway 299 is located directly adjacent to the site and eagles utilizing this area are likely conditioned to some level of disturbance from human-based noise or activity. There will be negligible long-term beneficial impacts to foraging or perching bald eagles as use of the area by visitors and park employees will likely decrease slightly from current levels once restoration is completed.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on bald eagles. Cumulative impacts to bald eagles under Alternative B will be negligible.

Conclusion: Adverse impacts to bald eagles under Alternative B will be short term and minor, while beneficial impacts will be long-term and negligible.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Alternative)

With additional human use of the site, it is likely that disturbance to bald eagles utilizing habitats in and around the site will increase slightly over current levels. However, since the area is fairly small and does not seem to offer unique or rare habitat, it is likely that bald eagles disturbed by human presence or activity will utilize other areas around the reservoir that offer similar habitats or foraging opportunities. It is also likely that eagles utilizing this area are conditioned to some level of human-based noise or activity as Highway 299 is located directly adjacent to the project area. Impacts to bald eagles under Alternative C will likely be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts: Projects planned in the near future in the Oak Bottom developed area such as the rehabilitation of structures and infrastructure will have little to no impact on bald eagles. Cumulative impacts to bald eagles under Alternative C will be negligible.

Conclusion: While the use of the site by bald eagles may experience a moderate decrease, the impacts are expected to be negligible due to the small size of the affected area and intermittent level of use by visitors and park staff.

There would be no impairment on threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

VEGETATION

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Native vegetation resources will be directly impacted on a minor scale by the removal of small amounts of vegetation for the purpose of protecting structures from fire. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced which would constitute a beneficial effect on the site. The site will continue to be managed as it currently is resulting in a gradual return of native vegetation to areas receiving little human contact.

Cumulative Impacts: The cumulative impact of this alternative will be negligible as the development at Oak Bottom will result in the removal of only a few native shrubs and trees and this will be more than offset by the gradual return of native vegetation at the unused McDermott Property site. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced in both areas, which will constitute a minor though beneficial effect.

Conclusion: Under Alternative A, the impact of the proposed project will be beneficial, minor, site-specific, and long-term. While some vegetation will be removed, the amounts will be negligible and will be offset by the beneficial effects of the return of native vegetation to the site. Fire safety to structures

and surrounding vegetation will be improved. Vegetation on the property will mature to a more natural shrub and canopy layer than currently exists. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

Under Alternative B, old roads and landforms will be recontoured to their original state and revegetated with native plants. These actions will eventually produce a landscape characterized by a vegetation community returning to a more natural state. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced to the greatest extent possible throughout the site. Since all structures will be removed, there will no longer be the need to continually manage the vegetation on site for hazard forest fuels reduction beyond that which occurs on any completely vegetated site in the park.

Cumulative Impacts: The Oak Bottom development expected to occur in the next few years will result in the removal of some native plants. The restoration of the McDermott landscape in Alternative B would more than offset the degree of native plant removal that could be expected during the Oak Bottom development project, resulting in an overall net increase in native plants in the area. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced, which will constitute an indirect, minor, beneficial effect. These impacts will range from minor to moderate in intensity depending on the amount of vegetation removed and the degree of revegetation undertaken.

Conclusion: The effect of Alternative B on the vegetation and wildlife will be beneficial, minor to moderate, site-specific to local, and long-term. Landforms will be restored to natural contours, which will promote site conditions and hydrology that will improve and increase native plant and wildlife habitat and increase the number of native plants. Treatment of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will also contribute to the improvement of the native plant landscape both on site and throughout the park.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Action)

Under Alternative C, some landform restoration will occur that will increase habitat for and the number of native plants. Some vegetation will be removed to decrease hazard fuels around structures. Populations of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will be reduced to the greatest extent possible. A native plant nursery will be developed on the property that will significantly improve native plant availability for revegetation projects throughout the park. The potential use of other buildings on site for administrative purposes or housing will mean that this property will be integrated into the working life of the park. Rehabilitating the structures and encouraging the return of the site's natural vegetation to complement this proposed use will produce direct, beneficial consequences for the site and for the park as a whole.

Cumulative Impacts: The cumulative effects of Alternative C combined with planned development in the nearby Oak Bottom area will result in the loss of some native plants for both projects, but not to a significant degree. The reduction in native plants will be more than offset by the positive effects of landform restoration that will improve habitats and hydrology for native plants on the McDermott Property site.

Conclusion: Under Alternative C, the project will have a beneficial, local, long-term impact. While some plants will be removed for hazard fuel reduction (direct effect), the partial return of the property to more natural conditions will increase native plant habitat and numbers (indirect effect). The addition of a native plant nursery will greatly enhance the park's revegetation program. This will have a beneficial park-wide effect on the cultural landscape. Treatment of yellow star thistle, an exotic species, will also contribute to the improvement of the native plant landscape.

There would be no impairment on vegetation as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES - VEGETATION

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

There will be no impact to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this alternative, since none occur in the project area. Suitable habitat exists for *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* but none of these plants has been noted in the project area. *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* is on a California Native Plant Society watch list, List 4, which is a list of the sensitive plants of least concern at this time. Whiskeytown NRA is host to many populations of this plant and if a new population was to establish in the project area, the impact of project work will still be considered negligible. The gating of non-recreational roads in the area and the removal of the bridge crossing Grizzly Gulch Creek will decrease motorized passage through the site and this will be seen as beneficial. Since only those actions which are presently occurring on the site (routine maintenance and hazard forest fuels reduction) will continue, the site will remain largely undisturbed.

Cumulative Impacts: No cumulative effects will occur since none of Whiskeytown's plants of concern occur in either the McDermott property site or the Oak Bottom Development site.

Conclusion: There will be no impact to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this Alternative, as none occur in the project area.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

There will be no impact to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this alternative, since none occur in the project area. Suitable habitat exists for *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* but none has been noted in the project area. *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* is on a California Native Plant Society watch list, List 4, which is a list of the sensitive plants of least concern at this time. Whiskeytown has many populations of this plant and if a new population was to establish in the project area, the removal of structures, recontouring and revegetation the site, removal of the bridge across Grizzly Gulch Creek, and the gating of non-recreational roads can be accomplished without damage to this sensitive plant.

Cumulative Impacts: No cumulative effects will occur since none of Whiskeytown's plants of concern occurs at either the McDermott property site or the Oak Bottom development site.

Conclusion: There will be no impact to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this Alternative, as none occur in the project area.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action)

There will be no impacts to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this Alternative, since none occur in the project area. Suitable habitat exists for *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* but none has been noted in the project area. *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii* is on a California Native Plant Society watch list, List 4, which is a list of the sensitive plants of least concern at this time. Whiskeytown has many populations of this plant and if a new population was to establish in the project area, the renovation of structures, recontouring and revegetation the site, removal of the bridge across Grizzly Gulch Creek, and the gating of non-recreational roads can be accomplished without damage to this sensitive plant.

Cumulative Impacts: No cumulative effects will occur since none of Whiskeytown's plants of concern occurs in either the McDermott property site or the Oak Bottom development site.

Conclusion: There will be no impact to endangered, threatened, rare, or sensitive plants under this Alternative, as none occur in the project area.

There would be no impairment on threatened and endangered vegetation as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

WATER RESOURCES (Water Quality, Wetlands, and Floodplains)

Effects of Alternative A (No Action)

Non-recreational roads in the project area will be gated. These will be scarified and revegetated to lessen erosion. Until this happens, rainstorm events will continue to deposit large volumes of water on these roads resulting in the transportation of loose sediments to nearby streams. Water bodies adjacent to the property will continue to experience increasing sediment loads. During the scarification and revegetation of these roads, however, sedimentation impacts will be mitigated by placement of weed-free mulch on disturbed soil. Due to the small area affected, minimum slope aspect, and sediment mitigation efforts, only small amounts of sediment (one cubic yard or less) will be transported to adjacent water bodies for only one season. The site's drainage patterns will remain as they are currently. Grizzly Gulch Creek's channel contains mature riparian vegetation throughout its corridor and this will remain unchanged. The cement spring box in the upper meadow will remain as well.

Cumulative Impacts: There will be no cumulative affects from sedimentation in conjunction with future work at Oak Bottom. The small amount of sediment released from the McDermott property will be barely detectable.

Conclusion: Under this alternative, there will be short-term, adverse, negligible impacts to adjacent streams and Grizzly Gulch Cove due to the small amount of sediment transported. However, there will be long-term, beneficial, minor impacts from reestablishment of vegetation on the scarified roads reducing erosion and sedimentation.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

The process of scarifying roads and recontouring disturbed slopes undertaken in this alternative will disrupt (loosen) the natural and compacted soil horizon. Where buildings are removed, exposed soil increases potential for erosion and sedimentation. Disruption of the soil profile frees fine-grained sediment for transport to streams and lakes. However, sedimentation impacts will be mitigated by placement of weed-free mulch on disturbed soil. Due to the size of the area affected, minimum slope aspect, and sediment mitigation efforts, sediment (ten cubic yard or less) will be transported to waters of the U.S. for only one season. The cement spring box in the upper meadow will be removed and the spring's drainage allowed to flow again in a preferred channel of its own making.

Cumulative Impacts: There will be no cumulative affects from sedimentation in conjunction with future work at Oak Bottom. The small amount of sediment released from the McDermott property will be detectable at the site and barely detectable at Oak Bottom.

Conclusion: Under this alternative, there will be short-term, adverse, minor impacts to nearby water bodies due to the small amount of sediment transported as a result of restoring the site's natural contours and drainage systems. However, there will be long-term, beneficial, moderate impacts from reestablishment of vegetation on the scarified roads and hill slopes reducing erosion and sedimentation of on-site streams.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Action)

As in the other two alternative already described, the roads in the project area will be gated. These will eventually be recontoured to reflect the original landforms over which they were built. The process of scarifying roads disrupts (loosens) the compacted soil horizon to allow for revegetation. Under this alternative, structures will be modified to permit their use for administrative purposes, housing, and/or a native plant nursery. Currently, there is no suitable infrastructure on site to support these uses; these will be installed. The process of digging trenches for utilities disrupts the soil horizon. Disruption of the soil profile frees fine-grained sediment for transport to streams and lakes. Sedimentation impacts will be mitigated by placement of weed-free mulch on disturbed or exposed soil. Due to the small area affected, minimum slope aspect, and sediment mitigation efforts, only small amounts of sediment (ten cubic yard or

less) will be transported to nearby water bodies for only one season. As in Alternative B, the spring box in the upper meadow will be removed and its discharge will be encouraged to flow in a channel that will facilitate a natural pattern of excess water removal from the site. The small channel this will produce will be allowed to naturally revegetate. The small spring flowing near the main cabin will similarly be encouraged to flow in a natural channel of its own choosing.

Cumulative Impacts: There will be no cumulative affects from sedimentation in conjunction with future work at Oak Bottom. The small amount of sediment released from the McDermott property will be detectable at the site and barely detectable at Oak Bottom.

Conclusion: Under this alternative, there will be short-term, adverse, minor impacts to nearby water bodies from redeveloping this site, due to the small amount of sediment transported and mitigation measures implemented. However, there will be long-term, beneficial, minor impacts from reestablishment of vegetation on the scarified roads and hill slopes reducing erosion and sedimentation to nearby watercourses.

There would be no impairment on water resources as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)

The bedrock geology of this small site is Copley-Greenstone and the associated soils found within the site are highly erosive. The predominant soil type in the area of the McDermott Property site is sandy to silty loam. Non-recreational roads in the project area will be gated to lessen soil erosion. These will eventually be scarified and revegetated to some degree. The process of scarifying roads disrupts (loosens) the compacted soil horizon and revegetating disturbed slopes disrupts the soil horizon, all of which might enhance soil erosion at the site. However, the benefits to be gained from removing traffic from the project site's roads and restoring these to a more natural state will have long term beneficial effects to soil loss in the area.

Cumulative Impacts: Past development at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area has contributed to increased soil erosion and compaction. Reasonably foreseeable future actions, such as rehabilitation of the Oak Bottom Campground and improvements to the wastewater treatment facility have the potential to further impact geologic resources and soils. Potential impacts will be adverse and range in intensity from minor to moderate, depending upon both the scope of the potential actions and the location. However, because there is no construction associated with the No Action alternative, continuing to manage the site as it presently occurs will have negligible impacts on the area.

Conclusion: Because this alternative will result in no new construction or renovation, the site's geology and soil conditions will not change appreciably. With the barricading of the property's non-recreational roads, outside traffic will cease. These roads will ultimately be scarified and revegetated to mimic their previously undisturbed state, thereby significantly reducing erosion on the property. The benefits from this will be major, direct and long term in consequence.

Effects of Alternative B (Natural Restoration)

The process of scarifying roads and recontouring as suggested in this alternative will disrupt the natural and compacted soil horizon. Disruption of the soil profile frees fine-grained sediment for transport to streams and lakes. Development of a new soil profile can take years to hundreds of years to form. Addition of beneficial mycorrhizae can aid in the development of the A and B soil horizons. Under Alternative B, less than one acre will be disturbed from the various restoration activities proposed under this alternative. Where buildings are removed, exposed soil has increased potential for erosion and sedimentation. Therefore, soil and rock cast aside during disturbed lands restoration will be susceptible to some erosion but standard erosion control measures, such as temporary silt fences, sand bags, or straw mulching will be used, as necessary, to minimize any potential soil erosion.

Cumulative Impacts: There will be no cumulative impacts in conjunction with other nearby projects due to the small amount of acreage disturbed on the site.

Conclusion: There will be a short term, minor, adverse impact to soils and geologic resources of the McDermott property due to the small acreage affected by the removal of structures and materials. However, with the recontouring, scarifying, and revegetation of exposed soils on the site, the major impacts from this project will prove beneficial over the long term.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse – Proposed Action)

The process of digging trenches for installation of utilities disrupts the natural and compacted soil horizon. Disruption of the soil profile frees fine-grained sediment for transport to streams and lakes. As in the other two alternatives, non-recreational roads will be gated and restoration to their original state as much as possible through recontouring, scarifying and revegetation, will considerably reduce erosion on the project site. Rehabilitation and reuse of the structures on the McDermott Property site for administrative uses, housing, and a native plant nursery will result in some short term adverse soil disturbance. However, the site will be revegetated and soil erosion control mitigation measures, described elsewhere in this assessment, will be implemented until the site becomes established.

Cumulative Impacts: Reasonably foreseeable future actions at Whiskeytown, such as the rehabilitation of the Oak Bottom Campground and water treatment facility have the potential to produce further soil disturbance and contribute to erosion whenever undeveloped slopes are graded and soils are exposed. The impacts upon geologic resources and soils will be adverse and range in intensity from minor to moderate, depending upon both the scope of the potential actions and the location. Soil loss associated with future actions will be lessened by requirements to provide ground cover and other erosion controls during and after construction.

Conclusion: Restoration-related impacts resulting from implementation of this alternative to geologic and soil resources will be adverse and moderate in intensity but short-term. Benefit to the site, from barricading the roads linking the site to locations outside the property and the park will be major and long term in consequence since intense erosion occurs from the use of these roads by the four-wheel drive vehicles needed to access them.

There would be no impairment on geology and soils as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Definitions of Intensity Levels

Certain important research questions about human history can only be answered by the analysis of actual physical material produced by human culture. These resources have the potential to answer, in whole or in part, such research questions. A cultural site can be eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if the site has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. A cultural site can be nominated to the National Register in one of three historic contexts: local, state, or national (see National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*). For purposes of analyzing impacts to cultural resources, thresholds of change for the intensity of an impact are based upon the potential of the site to yield information important in prehistory or history, as well as the probable historic context of the affected site. For this section, impacts are defined as follows:

Negligible:	the impact on cultural resources is at the lowest levels of detection - barely measurable with no perceptible consequences to cultural resources.
Minor:	the impact on cultural resources affects a cultural site(s) with little or no potential to yield information important in prehistory or history. These cultural resources are generally ineligible to be listed in the National Register.
Moderate:	the impact on cultural resources affects a cultural site(s) with the potential to yield information important in prehistory or history. The historic context of the affected site(s) would be local or state. These cultural resources are generally eligible to be listed in the National Register.
Major:	the impact on cultural resources affects a cultural site(s) with the potential to yield important information about human history or prehistory. The historic context of the affected site(s) would be national. These cultural resources are generally eligible to be listed in the National Register.
Impairment:	a major, adverse impact to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Effects of Alternative A (No-Action)

Structures and materials found on the McDermott Property site will continue to receive minimal maintenance for safety and stability reasons only. Hazardous materials will be removed and hazardous forest fuels will be maintained in their present condition. The bridge over Grizzly Gulch Creek built by the previous property owner has no historic value nor does it lead to any other cultural resources of interest; rather, it is a safety hazard that will be removed. There are also a number of non-recreational roads that originate on the property that also do not lead to any cultural resources of interest. These roads will be gated and eventually restored to their previous undisturbed condition. Otherwise, the structures and materials on the site will remain in their unrehabilitated state and allowed to continue to deteriorate. No efforts will be made to interpret the site. Because there will not be any new construction on the site, it is unlikely that other cultural or archeological resources will be identified. At the head of Grizzly Gulch Cove, several known archeological sites have been noted but these will remain in their unexcavated state.

Cumulative Impacts: Cultural resources at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area are subject to damage from vandalism, visitor access, and natural processes. Past development in the park has resulted in the disturbance and loss of some cultural resources during excavation and construction activities. Reasonably foreseeable future actions, such as rehabilitation of the Oak Bottom campground and wastewater facility could also disturb cultural resources. If significant cultural resources could not be

avoided, the information they possess regarding prehistoric and/or historic lifeways will be documented and recovered, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The impacts to such cultural resources will be adverse and range in intensity from minor to moderate, depending upon the scope of the potential actions, as well as the significance of any affected resources. Because there is no ground disturbance associated with the No Action Alternative, this alternative will not contribute to the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on cultural resources in the park.

Conclusion: This alternative will produce minor impacts to the park's cultural resource base, since no change to existing management direction will result. However, due to the fact that the site does contain structures and materials from a former mining operation that has links to the California Gold Rush Era, to let the site remain as it is today invites continued deterioration and vandalism of its structures and materials. These impacts will be direct, long-term, and adverse.

Effects of Alternatives B (Natural Restoration)

The actions proposed in this alternative will result in the removal of all structures and materials associated with the McDermott family tenancy. These structures are an example of mining operations undertaken by a typical miner of the era. While these may be ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the structures and materials found on the property are of interest to the story of mining in the Whiskeytown area. Therefore, their removal will have a direct, adverse, and long-term impact on the possible story they could tell or add to concerning the mining history of Whiskeytown.

Cumulative Impacts: The clearing of the McDermott Property site as proposed by this alternative will not have any cumulative impacts since the activities proposed will not be cumulative in nature. Thus, the cumulative impacts of all these activities will be of short duration and negligible in intensity.

Conclusion: With the imminent filling of Whiskeytown Lake, efforts to rescue buildings from the settlements of Oak Bottom and Whiskeytown were made. The structures and materials on the McDermott Property Site are from a similar time period and present a similar story. The removal of these buildings will constitute an important loss to the physical evidence of Whiskeytown's colorful past, resulting in long-term, minor adverse impacts.

Effects of Alternative C (Adaptive Reuse - Proposed Action)

The McDermott Property site and adjacent lands have been extensively disturbed by past mining and construction activities associated with the McDermott family's tenancy. Rehabilitation of the structures for administrative purposes, housing, and a native plant nursery will result in minor ground disturbance of short duration. Excavation of trenches for utilities and restoration of the site to improve surface hydrology are expected to occur in previously disturbed ground. There are no known archeological resources within the area recommended for restoration or utility placement. However, activities associated with adaptively reusing this site could uncover materials which could be of historic interest to the interpretive activities that will be eventually take place at the site. Due to the general proximity of the ground disturbing work to the historic mining area, the possibility exists that cultural resources are present. To minimize any potential disturbance of unknown archeological/cultural resources, an archeologist will conduct a survey and monitor all ground disturbance. If, during any construction activities, previously undiscovered archeological/cultural resources are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be halted until the resources can be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990 will be followed.

If either significant archeological resources (i.e. those that are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places) or human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during trenching and installation of infrastructure, all items will be left *in situ* and the

landform re-contouring will be redirected to avoid further disturbance. Cultural resources determined ineligible for listing in the National Register will be recovered, documented, and recorded before further ground disturbance proceeds. Because significant resources will be avoided, potential short-term impacts to cultural resources will be adverse but most likely minor in intensity.

Cumulative Impacts: Cultural resources at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area are subject to damage from vandalism, visitor access, and natural processes. Past development in the park has resulted in the disturbance and loss of some cultural resources during excavation and construction activities. Reasonably foreseeable future actions at the park, such as rehabilitating the Oak Bottom Campground and improving the wastewater treatment facility could disturb cultural resources. If significant cultural resources could not be avoided, the information they possess regarding prehistoric and/or historic lifeways will be documented and recovered, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The impacts to such archeological/cultural resources will be adverse and range in intensity from minor to moderate, depending upon the scope of the potential actions, as well as the significance of any affected resources.

Conclusion: Because restoration will occur in previously disturbed ground, no known archeological resources will be impacted. In the event significant cultural resources are discovered during ground disturbance, the resources will be left *in situ* and avoided by rerouting the trench. Any adverse impacts are anticipated to be minor in intensity and short-term.

§106 Summary: After applying the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria of adverse effects (36 CFR Part 800.5, *Assessment of Adverse Effects*), the National Park Service concludes that implementation of Alternative C, the preferred alternative, will have *no adverse effect* on the cultural resources of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

There would be no impairment on cultural resources as a result of Alternatives A, B, or C.

Table 2. Comparative Summary of Environmental Impacts

Impact Topic	Alternative A – No Action	Alternative B – Natural Restoration	Alternative C – Adaptive Reuse for Park Operations
Visitor Use and Safety	Visitors will continue to remain largely unaware of this site since it will not be included in the park's literature nor signed from Highway 299. Structures kept structurally safe to view from outside. Grizzly Gulch Creek bridge will be removed and non-recreational roads gated for safety and resource protection.	Removal of the site's structures and materials will lessen its interest to visitors. Safety will be increased. Grizzly Gulch Creek bridge will be removed and non-recreational roads gated for safety and resource protection.	Structures will be rehabilitated for administrative uses, housing, and native plant nursery. Structures and materials will be interpreted for visitor interest and education. Grizzly Gulch Creek bridge would be removed and non-recreational roads gated for safety and resource protection.
Park Operations	Site's structures maintained for stability and safety. Material objects stored in secure facilities routinely checked by park rangers. Structures will ultimately deteriorate. Site will receive hazardous forest fuels reduction.	Removal of the site's structures and materials will reduce the maintenance and security needs. Site will return to as natural a state as possible. Hazardous forest fuels reduction will be in keeping with other park lands.	Rehabilitating structures for reuse will supply needed additional facilities. Routine maintenance will improve stability and safety. Infrastructure will be added to the site. While facilities will need additional maintenance and security, their usefulness will benefit park operations.
Wildlife	Wildlife will continue to use the site as they presently do. Shaded fuel breaks will be maintained.	Removal of manmade structures and materials and a return of natural vegetation will increase wildlife habitat and numbers.	Wildlife will likely not find this site as appealing as in the other two alternatives since more site visitation and occupancy occurs.

Threatened and Endangered Species – Fish and Wildlife	Bald eagles will likely continue to use the cove area for foraging and perching, as they currently do, while experiencing negligible levels of temporary disturbance. Other listed species will not be impacted.	Minor short-term adverse impacts to foraging bald eagles will increase due to construction activities. Long-term negligible beneficial impacts will occur due to decreased levels of human use of the site. Other listed species will not be impacted.	Bald eagles will experience slightly higher levels of disturbance over current levels while foraging or perching near the cove; however impacts will remain negligible as the site does not provide unique or rare habitats. Other listed species will not be impacted.
Vegetation	Vegetation on the site will remain as is, with attention given only to periodic removal of hazardous forest fuels. Revegetation of old roads will occur.	After the removal of structures and materials from the site, recontouring of disturbed lands and revegetation with native plants would occur. Continue reduction of hazardous forest fuels.	Recontouring, revegetation, and fuel break maintenance of the site will occur as in Alternative B.
Threatened and Endangered Species - Plants	No impacts are expected, as there are no T&E plant species in the project area	No impacts are expected, as there are no T&E plant species in the project area	No impacts are expected, as there are no T&E plant species in the project area
Water Resources	Non-recreational roads will be gated to lessen erosion with its resultant runoff in storm events.	Same as Alternative A for the road restoration. Cement spring box will be removed.	Same as Alternative A for the road restoration and B for the cement box removal. Site drainage will be managed.
Soils and Geologic Resources	Scarifying and revegetation of non-recreational roads in the area will assist in decreasing the erosion potential of these roads.	Non-recreational roads will be recontoured and revegetated.. Removal of structures and materials will increase the amount of exposed soil on the site. Use of mulch to protect exposed soils until vegetation successfully established.	Non-recreational roads treated as in Alternative B. Construction activities or the installation of infrastructure to the site will implement mitigation measures to control for soil erosion such as mulching.
Cultural Resources	Protection of cultural resources on the site will continue as at present. Fencing and a locked storage building provide the current level of protection. Scarifying and revegetation activities will be monitored in case unknown cultural resources are encountered.	With the removal of the structures and materials from the site and its return to a natural state, the discovery of new cultural resources is unlikely to occur. Recontouring and revegetation activities will be monitored in case unknown cultural resources are encountered.	Rehabilitation of structures, recontouring and revegetation activities may reveal unknown cultural resources at site which will need to be evaluated for significance. By rehabilitating this site, the existing cultural resources' deterioration will be arrested and the site can receive appropriate interpretation.

CONCLUSION

The National Park Service, in cooperation with multiple federal and state agencies and local organizations, is proposing to restore and maintain a 3 acre parcel of land that was added to the land base of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area upon the death of Paul McDermott. A number of alternatives were considered along with the potential resulting impacts to physical resources, biological resources, cultural resources, overall visitor experience, and local socioeconomic conditions. The preferred proposal will allow the park to restore the site and preserve the buildings, tools, and equipment used by a miner during the mid 1900's. There are some areas that need to be cleaned up as a result of mining activities that occurred on site, but the area is well-preserved and will allow the park to expand its interpretive programs to focus on a site that provides insight into a way of life long since past. With consideration of these points, and based on the environmental impact analysis as documented in this environmental assessment, the park has determined that there would be no impairment of park resources or values based on implementation of any of the alternatives being considered at this time.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The National Park Service has followed a public process to identify the issues and concerns related to restoration and maintenance of the McDermott property. From the initial scoping sessions with members of the public and other agencies, a series of alternatives were developed, analyzed and presented to the public. Public comments and responses have provided further refinement of the preferred alternative.

Agencies and organizations consulted with include Fish and Wildlife Service, Shasta County Board of Supervisors, California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Redding Rancheria.

PREPARERS

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DISTRIBUTION LIST

Copies of this environmental assessment will be available for review at the Shasta County Library in Redding, at Park Headquarters, and at the Visitor Center. The document will also be available to the public on the park's website. Compact discs containing the document will also be available upon request. Hard copies of the document will be sent to interested groups or agencies that have attended public meetings. An email will be sent to all people who have attended public meetings with instructions on how to access the document on the park's website and a press release will be issued to local media, agencies, and groups announcing the availability of the document and where it can be accessed. Local media, agencies, and groups who receive copies of press releases include Anderson Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Chico Enterprise, KLXR, Chico News, KEWB, KHSL, KIXE, KBLF, KNCQ, KQMS, Tehama Trader, Valley Post, Redding Record Searchlight, U.S. Forest Service, Redding Chamber of Commerce, After Five Magazine, Redwood National Park, KRCR, Sacramento Bee, Shasta County Board of Supervisors, KVIP, Red Bluff Daily News, Weaverville Chamber of Commerce, Office of Barbara Boxer, Office of Wally Herger, Chico 24, JFK Public Radio, Oak Bottom Marina, and Channel 7.

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Appendix 1

**News Release
10/16/2002**

**Letter to Interested Parties
10/09/2002**



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Whiskeytown National
Recreation Area

P.O. Box 188
Whiskeytown, CA 96095

530-242-3400 phone
530-246-5154 fax

Whiskeytown News Release

October 16, 2002

For Immediate Release

Jim Milestone (530) 242-3460

Public Meeting to Discuss Management of New Property on Grizzly Gulch Road on Tuesday, October 24th

The National Park Service is hosting a public meeting from 4 to 6pm on Thursday, October 24th, 2002 on Grizzly Gulch Road. The property new to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and was formerly owned by Mr. Paul McDermott. Mr. McDermott held a lifetime tenancy for the 3 acre parcel and when he died the property was transferred to the National Park Service and is now part of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

Superintendent Jim Milestone stated, "The National Park Service has considered various ways to manage the site and is interested in the public's perspective on those ideas. I want to provide you with an opportunity to share with me your ideas about how you think we should manage the site."

The site is about a ½ mile up Grizzly Gulch road, directly across Highway 299 from the Oak Bottom Marina entrance road. The public is invited to stop by and meet with Superintendent Milestone and park staff. Based on the public input that is received and the environmental evaluations of options developed, a decision about the site may be made as early as this coming winter.

It is expected that an Environmental Assessment will be prepared to determine if the proposed actions would result in a significant impact to the human environment, including the potential to adversely affect historic properties. This analysis is required by the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act. Public scoping will start on this project on October 24th. Materials presented during the public scoping session will be available beginning October 24th at park Headquarters on Kennedy Memorial Drive. Written public comments can be sent to Office of the Superintendent, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 188, Whiskeytown, California 96095 or email Jim_Milestone@NPS.GOV.

-NPS-



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Whiskeytown National
Recreation Area

P.O. Box 188
Whiskeytown, CA 96095

530-242-3400 phone
530-246-5154 fax

Dear <Inholder>

I would like to inform you of the National Park Service's intent to develop a management plan for the tract of land formerly owned by Mr. Paul McDermott. Mr. McDermott held a lifetime tenancy for the 3-acre parcel on Grizzly Gulch Road (see attached map). When Mr. McDermott died the property was transferred to the National Park Service and is now part of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

The National Park Service has considered various ways to manage the site, but must complete an environmental assessment prior to making a final decision. I want to provide you with an opportunity to share with me your ideas about what you think the National Park Service should do with the site.

On October 16th, from 4pm to 6pm, the National Park Service will be holding an open house at the house that Mr. Paul McDermott built in the early 1950's. The site is about a ½ mile up Grizzly Gulch road, directly across Highway 299 from the Oak Bottom Marina entrance road. I invite you to stop by and meet with me and my staff. Based on the public input that we receive and the environmental evaluations of options developed, I plan on making a decision during the middle part of this coming winter.

If you are unable to stop by on the 16th, please feel free to contact me by telephone at 530-242-3460 or send me a letter with your thoughts at the above address.

Sincerely,

Jim F. Milestone
Superintendent